

Lake Sun Leader

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Section: Opinion

Implement STEMI bill's goals ASAP

Lake of the Ozarks, Mo. -

We congratulate state Rep. Wayne Cooper for his success in shepherding the STEMI bill through the legislature. It was signed into law Friday by Gov. Matt Blunt.

The STEMI law, named for a fatal type of heart attack called ST-elevation myocardial infarction, will make Missouri the first state in the nation to develop a statewide system of response and care for victims of strokes and heart attacks.

According to the American Heart Association, coronary heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the U.S. and stroke is No. 3. In Missouri, heart attacks and strokes account for one-third of Missouri deaths annually.

The purpose of the new law will be to establish regional centers that specialize in such care so that victims of strokes or heart attacks can be transported to these centers rather than simply to the nearest medical facility.

Cooper believes that hundreds of lives may be saved annually as a result. In addition, providing care quickly often reduces the debilitating effect of a stroke or heart attack, meaning victims are likely to recover sooner and with fewer lasting effects.

Yet to be accomplished is implementation. A Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force has been formed. It must set guidelines and establish the regional centers statewide. We encourage the task force to complete its work as quickly as possible.